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PLANT QUARANTINES - PROTECTION FOR AMERICA'S RESOURCES

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More than 27 million vehicles enter the United States from Mexico each year. In these vehicles may be baggage containing such plant pests as the injurious fruit flies, which can hide in a perfect-looking tropical fruit; the pink bollworm, which can come in with a cotton boll or in cottonseed; and many other insects and diseases that could attack our crops and ornamentals. BN-22751

The job of defending our agricultural resources against foreign plant diseases and insects grows bigger and more complex each year—because of the increasing volume of travel and trade. And travelers' baggage provides a major way for plant pests to invade the country.

An estimated 178 million people, including regular commuters from Mexico and Canada, now enter the United States annually. They bring with them more than 32 million pieces of baggage—all potential carriers of plant pests, which can hide on innocent-looking plants, fruits, and souvenirs made of agricultural materials.

Keeping these plant pests out of the country is the duty of the Plant Quarantine Division of the Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Highly trained inspectors at more than 70 seaports, international airports, and border crossings examine baggage, cargo, stores, and mail for materials that might conceal hitchhiking pests.

Plant pests take a toll of about \$7 billion a year in damage to U. S. crops, forests, and ornamental plants. Many of these pests are not native to this country; they entered from abroad before plant quarantine regulations were enacted. The gypsy moth, stem rust fungus, hessian fly, boll weevil, European corn borer, and alfalfa weevil are a few illustrations.

Working with other Government inspectors on the Mexican border, plant quarantine inspectors examine baggage and parcels belonging to passengers and pedestrians crossing into the United States. No amount of plant material or fruit is too small to pose a national threat—just one wormy fruit can start an infestation that could require years and millions of dollars to eradicate. N-6820

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Research Service

Picture Story No. 174
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More than 4 million passengers, with 12 million bags of luggage, arrive at U. S. international airports each year. Here, at New York's Kennedy International Airport, passengers' clearance through customs and agricultural inspection. BN-22754



(Left) At one of the counters at Kennedy International Airport, an inspector finds a plant and insect. Identification of pests found in items from passengers' baggage some fruit in a passenger's baggage. Travelers can help inspectors keep abreast of current distribution of plant help by promptly presenting for inspection appropriate countries. Fruits and vegetables are cut open in the search for foreign plant materials they may be carrying in various stages of development. Soil is studied under a microscope for insects visible to the naked eye. All prohibited material is destroyed after inspection. BN-22748

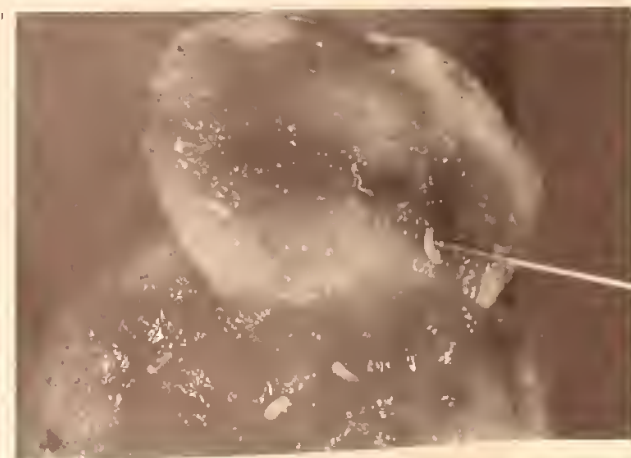


Today, inspectors at our ports of entry stop potentially damaging pests on an average of one every 15 minutes around the clock. During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1964, for example, they intercepted the Japanese citrus scale insect 424 times and the citrus canker organism 339 times. The golden nematode, a soil-borne pest of potatoes and tomatoes, was stopped 71 times; it arrived in foreign soil adhering to plants and to non-agricultural items such as automobiles.

The Mediterranean fruit fly—intercepted 211 times last year—succeeded in establishing itself in Florida as recently as 1956. This destructive fruit and vegetable pest was eradicated in a State-Federal program that cost \$10 million and required extensive aerial spraying.

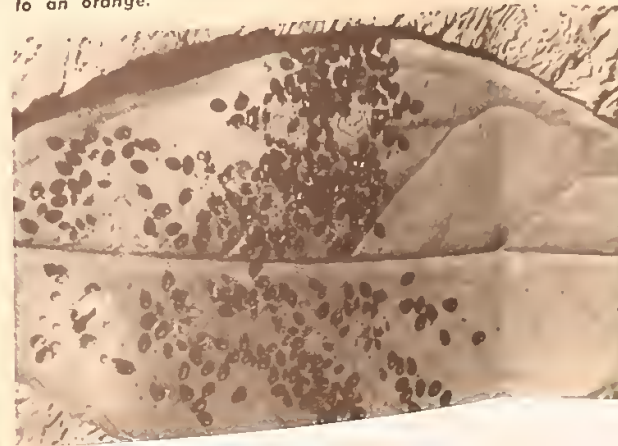
Commercial shipments of plants and plant materials move through a system of permits, inspection, and treatment (if necessary) to eliminate the danger of introducing foreign pests. Travelers' baggage presents a more difficult problem. Damaging plant pests can lurk in a tropical fruit or vegetable, souvenir toys stuffed with foreign cotton or straw, a beautiful lei, or a gardenia corsage.

Plant quarantine inspectors are our first line of defense against foreign plant pests. Full cooperation by informed travelers is the second line of defense.



(Above) Fruit fly larvae, like these in a foreign mango, often hide beneath the skin of innocent-looking fruits. Several species of fruit flies that occur abroad pose a constant threat to U.S. citrus production valued at \$400 million a year. BN-22752

(Below) Citrus leaves can carry another dangerous pest—the citrus blackfly. These tiny insects were found on a leaf still attached to an orange. BN-15032



An inspector examines ornamental plants that were brought in from Hawaii. He will also inspect the passengers' leis—certain kinds of flowers and other decorative materials are prohibited entry. BN-4535

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Baggage is inspected before air passengers depart for the Continental United States from Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, and the Bahamas. Luggage inspected and cleared does not have to be re-inspected upon arrival in the U. S. N-12992

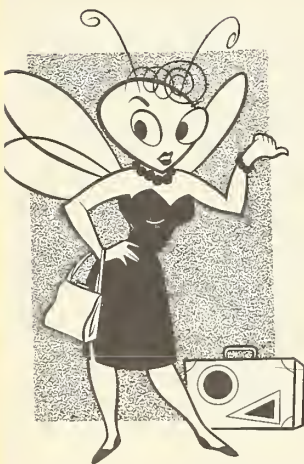


This souvenir—a live beetle with jewels glued to its back—may be bought in Mexico and worn as a "living brooch." U.S. visitors can't bring jeweled beetles home with them, however, because importation of living insects is restricted to protect U.S. crops, forests, and ornamentals. N-48939



Nursery plants are being prepared for treatment in a fumigation chamber. Treatments, which also include hot water and chemical dips, are selected to kill the pest without damaging the material itself.

BN-22753



This hitchhiking bug, a symbol used by the Plant Quarantine Division on publications, posters, and television, reminds travelers that innocent-looking fruits, plants, and souvenirs can carry plant pests into the United States. Prospective travelers should obtain advance information and permits from the Department of Agriculture before bringing plant materials from foreign countries. They should declare all such materials to inspectors at ports of entry when they return to the United States.

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